

NIKE MISSILE BATTERY PR-79, CONTROL AREA  
Tucker Hollow Road, south of State Route 101  
Foster  
Providence County  
Rhode Island

HAER No. RI-37-B

HAER  
RI  
4-FOST  
18-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HAER  
RI  
4-FOST,  
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## HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

NIKE MISSILE Battery PR-79, Control Area

HAER NO. RI-37-B

Location: Tucker Hollow Road, south of State Route 101  
Foster  
Providence County  
Rhode Island

UTM: Control:

19/274580/4635760  
19/274620/4635690  
19/274530/4635640  
19/274550/4635580  
19/274470/4635490  
19/274410/4635740

USGS Quadrangle: Clayville, RI

Date of  
Construction: 1955

Engineer: United States Army Corps of Engineers with Contractors

Architect: United States Army Corps of Engineers with Contractors

Present Owner: Control Site, Town of Foster School District

Present Use: Control Site, office space, recreational space

Significance: The Foster NIKE Missile Battery PR-79 Control Area contributes to the significance of the NIKE Missile Battery because it was here that all radar facilities were placed which were used to launch missiles at the Launch Area. The Control Area is an intact, physical manifestation of American military history.

Project Information: This mitigative documentation was undertaken in 1993 in accordance with Stipulation IV(A)(2) of the Programmatic Agreement for portions of the Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP), executed by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England Division.

Jane Carolan, Architectural Historian and Project Manager; Martin Stupich, Photographer; Barbara Putnam and Joyce Clements, Researchers; with Timelines, Inc. Submitted to: ENSR Consulting and Engineering, for the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England Division.

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## **FOSTER NIKE BATTERY PR-79 BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS - CONTROL AREA**

### Overall Description

The Control Area, 13.36 acres with 6.23 acres of easement, is L-shaped and sits on top of a hill with a large working orchard to the north and an old barn and house to the south. Closest to the entrance are the substation, athletic field and pump house. The Barracks/Mess Hall and Administration Buildings are arranged in a U shape at the south end of the site. The Barracks and Administration Buildings are sealed with plywood; the Mess Hall is currently the only occupied building. The Leaching Field is south and east of the Mess Hall. Each of these buildings is painted a different bright primary color. The radar area, containing the Interconnecting Corridor and Frequency Changer and Generator Building is east of the athletic field, on the highest elevation of the site.

All of the structures in the Control Area are connected to each other by concrete roads and walkways. Three concrete pads, arranged around the Interconnecting Corridor, were hardstands for the radar control vans.

The Control Area has an abandoned feeling to it, even though one building is occupied. Buildings are boarded up, the landscaping has been neglected, and the roads are in disrepair. The radar Control Area buildings have been vandalized and are in poor condition, with debris and broken glass scattered inside and outside.

The Control Area is in its original configuration and there have been no additional structures built nor have the buildings (except for radar control) experienced any significant changes. There is evidence of a guardhouse at the entrance gate (there is a small concrete slab). Although the 1957 site drawings do not show a guardhouse, it could have been added later.

The Control Area contained the radar that tracked incoming targets and positioned the missiles for strikes. It was here, too, that the launch commands were given. These operations took place in the control vans. When the site was decommissioned, the vans were removed, together with all the equipment in the Interconnecting Corridor and Frequency Changer and Generator Buildings. There was also a Bore Sighting Mast approximately 240 feet east of the Frequency Changer and Generator Building, which was used to calibrate the radar. Due to the heavy brush cover on the site, it was impossible to determine whether the mast is still standing.

### Barracks

The Barracks, also known as the Headquarters Building, originally housed EM, NCOs and BOs. EM were quartered in the southern end of the building, NCOs in the mid-section and the BOs in the northern end of the building. In the late 1960s, when the building was taken over by the Foster School District, it was used for school offices, located in the north end of the building, and classrooms, located in the south end of the building. The School District

made only minor changes such as adding women's bathrooms and removing or adding partitions. Today, the building is unused and all windows and doors have been sealed with plywood.

The building is a long, one-story, L-shaped structure 30 x 70 x 190 feet, with a flat, sloped composition roof. It is constructed on a concrete slab with concrete-block walls. There is a large, brick chimney located on the west elevation. This chimney is painted orange, now somewhat faded. All entrances are enclosed with weather-proof, wood-frame enclosures that project from the main body of the building. The front door is composed of double, metal-framed glass doors. Rear doors are metal. Although sealed, windows are intact. They are symmetrically arranged, in pairs, on all elevations, and are wood-framed with 2/2 horizontal muntined panes. There appear to be no changes to the exterior of the building.

Within the building, there have been remarkably few changes. All original surfaces are intact. Walls are concrete block and floors are covered in the original asphalt tile. Columns and beams are composed of steel I-beams bolted together. Documentation has not been found to determine whether these are original or were replacements for the built-up wood columns and beams that were specified under the provisions for Modified Emergency Construction.

Within the EM area, a partition was added to make additional classroom space. Within the BO area, a wall was removed to make a storage area and another added to separate the east rooms of the BO area from the rest of the rooms. The original bathrooms, located immediately north of the entrance to the building, have been converted into men's and women's bathrooms, resulting in the loss of one original closet.

The building is in fair condition, with water damage from a broken pipe in the area and resultant moldy, damp air throughout the structure.

### Mess Hall

The Mess Hall originally housed a kitchen and dining room. Today, the building is used for office space. As originally built, the dining area took up the western two-thirds of the building and the kitchen and storage area the eastern third. Of all the buildings in the Control Area, this has undergone the most changes, although the 1953 plan can still be seen.

The building is a long, one-story, rectangular structure, 30 x 90 feet with a flat, sloped composition roof. It is constructed on a concrete slab with concrete-block walls. There is a large, brick chimney located on the north elevation. Windows are wood-framed and 2/2, with horizontal muntins. They are paired on the facade but are mixed single and paired on the remaining elevations. The building is painted green, but has faded considerably. The front entrance has a concrete-block enclosure that projects from the main body of the building. On the rear of the structure is a projecting wood and glass entrance. The west elevation has a recessed entry. Doors are all single, metal-framed with glass panels. There have been no changes to the exterior of this building.

Leased by a private corporation, the Mess Hall has undergone substantial interior changes. Although the concrete-block walls have not been covered, the floor has been completely carpeted. Original columns are wood 4 x 4's; beams are four 1 x 6's. Columns and beams are joined together by steel plates.

The large, open dining area is divided into two offices, a conference room, and a reception/secretarial space. The kitchen is used for additional office space and storage. This area still retains a large range hood and two raised platforms, covered with asphalt tile, upon which sat the stove and dishwasher. A wall dividing the dishwasher area and storage area has been removed and the bathroom has been updated and divided into men's and women's rooms.

#### Administrative Building

This building was originally used as the administrative headquarters for NIKE Battery PR-79. Here were located the medical room, arms and other supply storage, barber shop, mail room, day room, hobby room and offices. When taken over by the Foster School District it was to be used as a clinic, library storage, principal's office, classrooms and storage. Today, the building is vacant and all windows and doors have been sealed with plywood. With minor variations, this structure is similar to the 1954 plan.

The building is a long, one-story, rectangular structure, 30 x 130 feet with a flat, sloped composition roof. It is constructed on a concrete slab with concrete-block walls. There is a large, brick chimney located on the east elevation. Windows are wood-framed, symmetrically arranged, grouped in pairs and are 2/2 with horizontal muntins. The double front doors are composed of metal-framed glass. The building itself is painted blue.

This building has undergone only one change; a wall was removed in an office to make a reception area. Otherwise, the building is as built with all original finishes, including bare concrete-block walls and asphalt tile floors intact.

#### Interconnecting Corridor

The Interconnecting Corridor building housed the cable system that connected the radar trailers to each other and to the launch site. The Interconnecting Corridor, along with the radar vans and the Frequency Changer and Generator Building were the core of the track and launch operation of the NIKE site. Due to the classified nature of these operations during decommissioning, the Interconnecting Corridor and the Frequency Changer and Generator Building were stripped of all of their equipment except for a few electrical junction boxes. In addition, they have been heavily vandalized. For these reasons, these structures' functions can only be adequately conveyed through documentary evidence.

The Interconnecting Corridor is a small, one-story, flat-roofed, concrete-block structure, 15 x 30 feet, on a concrete slab. Windows, which are sealed with plywood, are 1/1 wood-framed. Doors are metal. Concrete pads for the control vans extend from the east and west elevations. The building has a small entrance area on the east and two rooms inside the main block.

Little original fabric remains in this building. There are remains of acoustical-tile ceilings, asphalt-tile floors and a fire wall between the two rooms. Electrical panel boxes remain in the entrance area.

#### Frequency Changer and Generator Building

The Frequency Changer and Generator Building contained equipment used to change the frequency of commercially supplied electricity used to operate radar and other equipment in the Control Area. Commercial power was changed from 60-cycle power to 400-cycle power.

The building is a small, rectangular shaped, 20 x 25 feet, flat-roofed, one-story structure. It is built of concrete blocks on a concrete slab. Windows, most of which are sealed with plywood, were 1/1 wood-framed. There are two metal cooling vents on the roof of the building, which were used to keep electrical equipment operational. The interior is littered with debris, with only an electrical junction box in place.

#### Athletic Court

The Athletic Court was built to increase morale for troops who were kept isolated and in a state of alert for long periods of time. There is a baseball field with a chain-link backstop and a large open field east of the diamond. Since being taken over by the Foster School District, a swing set, seesaws and a tennis court have been added.

#### Leaching Field

Located southwest of the Mess Hall, the Leaching Field is identical to the field at the Launch Area. It contains a field and a concrete control house.

#### Transformer Substation

Located just inside the entrance gate on the east side of the road is an electrical transformer which is enclosed with a chain link fence.

#### Water System

The water pump house, storage tank and well are located on the west side of the main access road, just inside the front gate. The pump house is a one-story, rectangular structure, 8 x 15 feet. It is built of concrete block, on a concrete slab with a flat, sloped roof. It contains a metal door on the west elevation and a wooden, 1/1 window on the north elevation. Inside is an operational water pump. The pump house is connected to a steel water tank, which in turn is connected to a concrete covered well just south of the tank and pump house.

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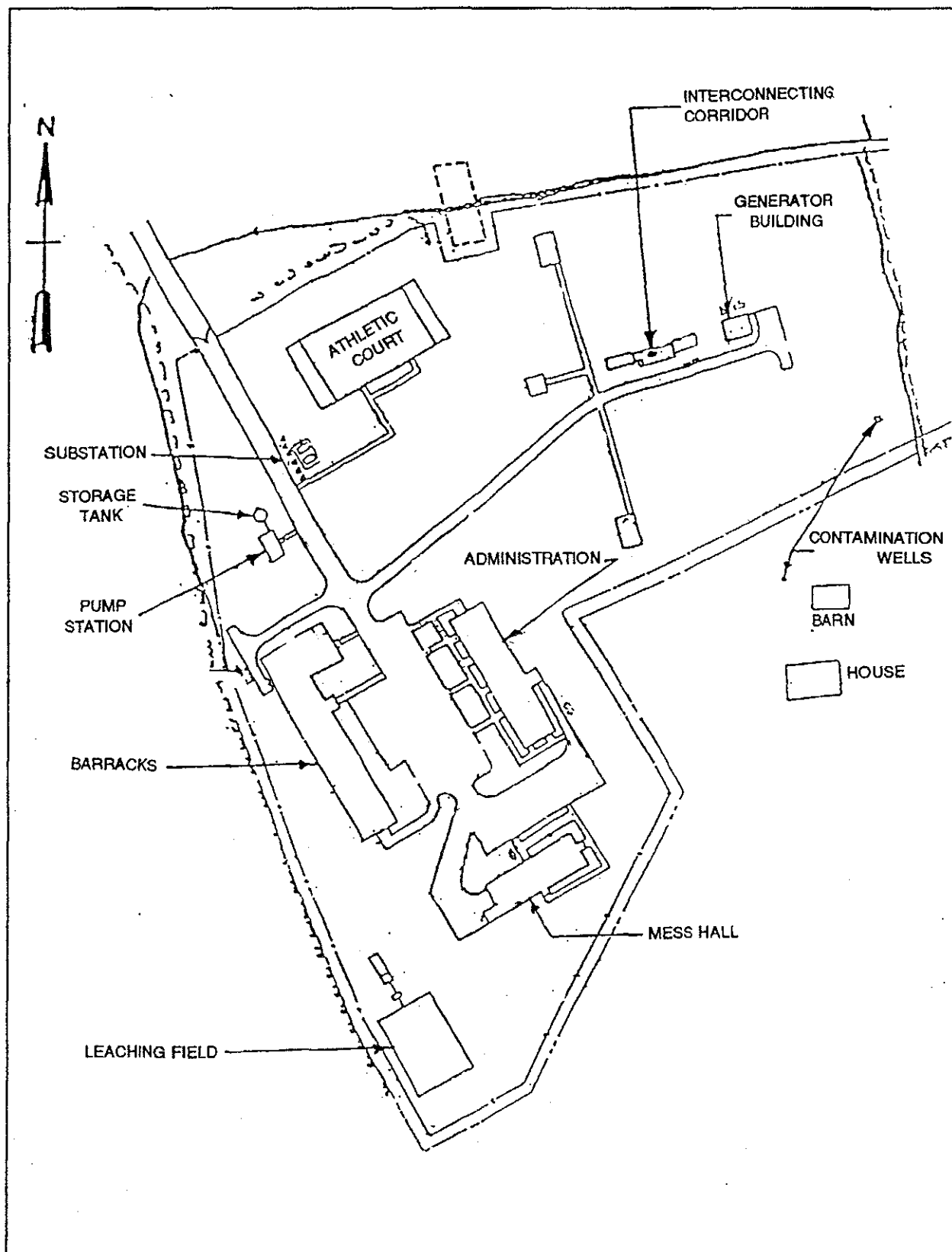
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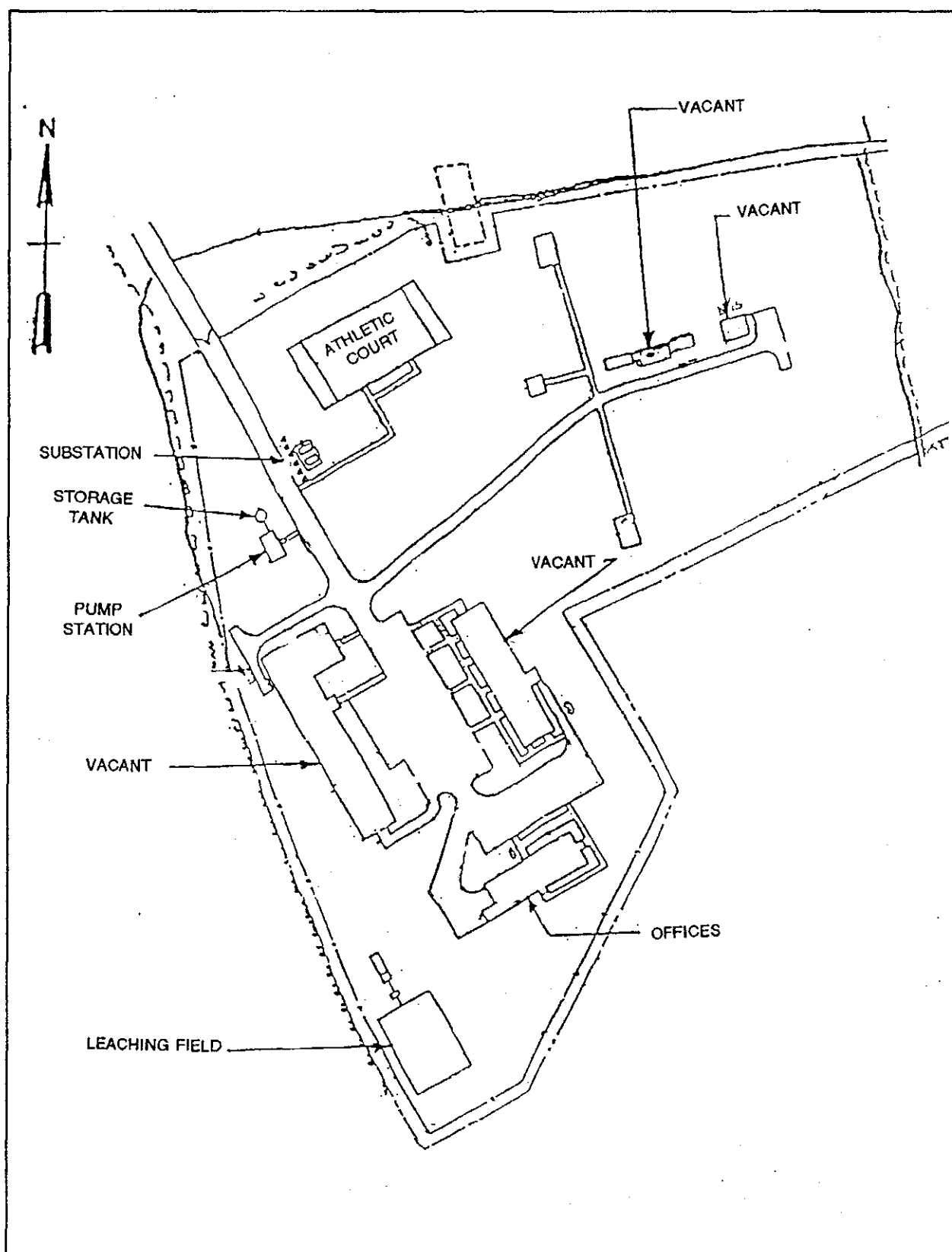
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